

## Communicator Awards > Marketing Effectiveness > Social Media

### "Section 503 Twitter Chat"

#### Background Information

Social Security's Ticket to Work program provides free employment support services to Social Security disability beneficiaries who want to work so that they can successfully transition from receiving cash benefits to becoming employed. Ticket to Work connects beneficiaries to services, such as interview coaching, résumé development, benefits counseling, vocational counseling and job placement. It also helps them take advantage of Social Security Work Incentives to safely transition from cash benefits while keeping their health care coverage. These services and incentives can help beneficiaries on their journey to employment and financial independence, ultimately freeing them from relying on Social Security payments and saving taxpayers' money.

We regularly host Disability Employment Twitter Chats to reach beneficiaries and their supporters (both individuals and disability organizations) about the Ticket to Work program, available employment resources and benefits policies. The chats and hashtag (#DEchat) have established Ticket to Work and Social Security as a leading voice and authority in the disability employment space online. **In October 2014, Ticket to Work partnered with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to host a Twitter Chat to promote awareness of revisions to Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, resulting in the most successful Disability Employment Twitter Chat since their inception.** In conjunction with National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the chat allowed Social Security disability beneficiaries, advocates, government agency representatives and community stakeholders to discuss the rules and benefits of Section 503, and how they affected each respective stakeholder group.

#### Target Audience

The Twitter Chat targeted Social Security disability beneficiaries who may be considering work, along with service providers, caregivers, employers and other disability-related organizations that support beneficiaries. 13.7 million Americans nationwide are eligible for the Ticket to Work program, and each year approximately 300,000 people enroll in the program by assigning their "Tickets" to employment networks and vocational rehabilitation agencies.

#### Objectives

We established four objectives for the October Twitter Chat.

- 1) Attract at least 30 Twitter users to participate in the chat
- 2) Generate 150 individual messages (questions, comments, and retweets)
- 3) Increase the number of followers of @chooseworkssa by at least 60 users
- 4) Build a conversation around Ticket to Work, the rules and benefits of Section 503 and how they impact our various stakeholders.

#### Challenges

Our primary challenge in October was garnering increased Twitter Chat participation while competing with other organizations that would also be discussing resources in connection with National Disability Employment Awareness Month commemorations. We also faced the ongoing challenge of delivering messages about complex policies to a diverse audience that included not only beneficiaries of differing ages, genders, literacy levels, types of disabilities, and benefit programs, but also included service providers and employers. In addition, the changes to the regulation had only been in effect for a few months and the impact of the changes were largely unknown.

**Methods and Strategies**

The chat was structured in a question and answer format during which Ticket to Work program staff asked the Department of Labor questions on Twitter. To direct our approach, we developed a detailed Twitter Chat Facilitator's Guide and Script containing roles for Ticket to Work and Department of Labor social media support staff (director, facilitator, monitor, and responder), key messages, promotion tactics and measurable objectives. Promotion strategies included email outreach, a post on the Ticket to Work program's blog, promotional Facebook and Twitter messages and direct message outreach to influencers on Twitter, such as the University of Tennessee's Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities, the U.S. Business Leadership Network and Paralyzed Veterans of America.

**Email outreach:**

In coordination with National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Ticket to Work and the U.S. Department of Labor promoted the Twitter Chat through their existing listservs. Cross-promotion efforts pushed email announcements to more than 140,000 subscribers.

## Ticket to Work Disability Employment Twitter Chat Event (#DEchat)



### Save the Date! October 24, 2014 Twitter Chat:

You're invited to join [Ticket to Work](#) for a [live Twitter Chat](#) with the [Department of Labor](#) (DOL) on Friday, October 24 at 12:00 PM EDT.

This month, we will be discussing [Section 503](#), the new regulations that promise more job opportunities than ever for people with disabilities. Section 503 requires federal contractors to take deliberate steps to recruit, hire, and retain people with disabilities. The new rules also allow you to voluntarily self-identify as a person with a disability. Federal contractors offer a wide variety of jobs, ranging from food service to economic consulting, and everything in between.

Learn what these rules mean for you and how you can find out about these opportunities. We'll also share information on how [Ticket to Work](#) can help you along the way.

Join us on Friday, October 24 at 12:00 PM EDT using #DEchat.

**New to Twitter Chats?** No problem. Twitter chats are easy ways for people to have a public conversation about a particular topic. To join, go to [Twitter.com](#) and search for the hashtag #DEchat. Follow the hashtag, or chime in by tweeting a question or comment with #DEchat added to your tweets.

### Questions?

Email us at [support@chooseworkttw.net](mailto:support@chooseworkttw.net) or call 1-866-968-7842 (V) or 1-866-833-2967 (TTY).

- Follow us on Facebook! [www.facebook.com/choosework](http://www.facebook.com/choosework)
- Follow us on Twitter! [www.twitter.com/chooseworkssa](http://www.twitter.com/chooseworkssa)
- Watch Ticket to Work Success Stories on YouTube! [www.youtube.com/user/choosework](http://www.youtube.com/user/choosework)



Social Security's Ticket to Work Program

Call the Ticket to Work Help Line

1-866-968-7842 (V)

1-866-833-2967 (TTY)

STAY CONNECTED:



SUBSCRIBER PREFERENCES:

[Manage Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) | [Delete Profile](#) | [Help](#)

This email was sent to [springer\\_email@ssa.com](mailto:springer_email@ssa.com) by Social Security Administration



### Choose Work Blog Post:

The blog post below garnered more than 1,200 page views on [choosework.net](http://choosework.net), a direct result of Ticket to Work and DOL email cross-promotion.

Social Security Social Security's Work Site For Beneficiaries For Service Providers User Settings

**Ticket to Work**  
Access to Employment Support Services for Social Security Disability Beneficiaries Who Want to Work

**Ready to Work?**  
Get Started Today!

Contact the Help Line  
Call 1-866-969-7842 (V)  
866-833-2967 (TTY)  
M-F 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM  
Send Us a Message


Home About Success Stories Find Help Find a Job Webinars & Tutorials Library Blog Contact Search What's New

You are here: / Home / Blog Archives / Blog Post

## More Jobs for People with Disabilities: Section 503 and You!

October 16, 2014

A live Twitter Chat with @USDOL on Friday, October 24 at 12 PM EDT.



You're invited to join Ticket to Work for a live Twitter Chat with the Department of Labor (DOL) on Friday, October 24 at 12 PM EDT.

This month, we will be discussing Section 503, the new regulations that promise more job opportunities than ever for people with disabilities. Section 503 requires federal contractors to take deliberate steps to recruit, hire, and retain people with disabilities. The new rules also allow you to voluntarily self-identify as a person with a disability. Federal contractors offer a wide variety of jobs, ranging from food service to economic consulting, and everything in between.

Learn what these rules mean for you and how you can find out about these opportunities. We'll also share information on how Ticket to Work can help you along the way.

Join us on Friday, October 24 at 12 PM EDT using #DEchat.

**New to Twitter Chats?** No problem. Twitter chats are easy ways for people to have a public conversation about a particular topic. To join, go to Twitter.com and search for the hashtag "#DEchat." Follow the hashtag, or chime in by tweeting a question or comment with "#DEchat" added to your tweets.

Posted in Events | 12 Comments »

<< Return to Blog

12 Comments

Receive Blog Updates

**Quick Links**

- View Latest Posts
- About the Blog
- Ticket To Work's Podcast
- Ticket Talk!

**Categories**

- Uncategorized
- Youth in Transition
- Ticket Program News
- Leadership Messages
- Career Tips
- Financial Literacy
- You Can Work Series
- Events
- Money Mondays: Your Path to Financial Independence
- Ticket Talk Podcasts

**Topics**

- #dechat
- #moneymondays
- #moneymondays
- accessibility
- accommodations
- ada
- amd

### Ticket to Work Social Media:

During the week leading up to the Twitter Chat, we engaged more than 57 organizations and individuals resulting in 176 promotional messages about the event. Organizations with the largest followings that helped publicize the event included the Department of Labor (188,465 followers), InSouthFlorida.com Business Directory (78,096 followers) and Social Security (18,133 followers). #DEchat social media conversations led to a potential reach of 417,826 Twitter users.

**Ohio OOD**  
Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities  
@OhioOOD

Following

### Ticket to Work #Disability Employment Twitter Chat Event #DEchat - Join the Chat!



Join us on October 24 at 12 PM EDT for a live Twitter Chat More Jobs for People with Disabilities: Section 503 and You Follow us @chooseworkssa and the hashtag #DEChat

RETWEETS 10 FAVORITES 4

Twitter Facebook LinkedIn YouTube Google+ RSS

Tweet from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities ([www.ood.ohio.gov](http://www.ood.ohio.gov)).

**Disability Network Oakland & Macomb**  
October 23 at 8:00pm ·

Want to learn more about Ticket to Work? Join representatives from the U.S. Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration for a live Twitter chat Friday at 12 noon EDT. The chat will focus on Section 503 - the new regulations that promise more job opportunities for people with disabilities.

Go to [Twitter.com](http://Twitter.com) and search for the hashtag "#DEchat" Follow the hashtag, or chime in by tweeting a question or comment with "#DEchat" added to your tweets.

Like · Comment · Share

Tweet from Disability Network Oakland & Macomb (<http://www.dnom.org/>).

## Results

The October 2014 Twitter Chat became our most successful of the year and most impactful in the history of Ticket to Work program outreach, increasing audience questions, comments and retweets by 150% over the average number of interactions garnered per #DEchat to date.

Participation from Twitter users came from employment networks around the country as well as people with disabilities who were learning about Ticket to Work and Section 503 for the first time. Interaction during the Twitter Chat included questions about disability employment support, requests for links to specific topics/issues and sharing success stories and resources from within their organizations.



Results show the above objectives were met as follows. The chat on Section 503:

- Attracted **162 Twitter users**, garnering **743 user questions, comments, and retweets**. This surpassed our objective to attract at least 30 Twitter users.
- Garnered **970 tweets** #DEchat tweets on Oct. 24, 2014, **exceeding our goal to drive 150 individual #DEchat messages by 547 percent**.
- Increased the number of followers of @chooseworkssa by **107, exceeding our objective to gain 60 new followers**.
- Led to overall elevated participation and increased conversation about Section 503 as a result of combined promotion efforts from the established online presences of DOL, Social Security and Ticket to Work.

## Overcoming Our Challenges

Through this event, we overcame the challenges identified above. For example, by focusing specifically on the recently announced Section 503 regulations, our content was distinct from other organizations focused on sharing general disability employment support resources in observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Additionally our approach to cross-promote the event in collaboration with DOL helped significantly in countering the challenge to decipher the complex regulation for diverse audience segments only a few months after the rule went in affect. Through targeted direct message outreach to influencers and strong email promotion to DOL and Social Security audiences, we reached every intended audience in our diverse set of stakeholder groups. More than 219 users such as the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Tennessee Disability Coalition, corporate recruiters and people with disabilities participated in the conversation about Section 503 – garnering more than 10.9 million potential impressions over the #DEchat promotional cycle and the day of the event.

